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reinforced. The precocity of childhood is proverbial. The poor little neglected wretches are guilty of innumerable petty pilferings to stave off the pangs of hunger. They grow dangerous faster than they grow in years, for poverty sharpens the wits and an empty stomach knows no conscience.

There is hardly a crime on the statute books of which children between the ages of six and fourteen have not been accused in the criminal courts of the city of New York.

No nation, much less the United States, can afford to permit its cities to breed such reinforcements to the criminal classes; and so it becomes the business of the whole nation to aid and sustain those brave and generous souls who are striving to redeem neglected children—even though such efforts be restricted by the geographical limits of a municipality.

ARTHUR DUDLEY VINTON.

II.

PHILOLOGICAL CURIOSITIES.

MR. SAMUEL L. CLEMENS ("Mark Twain"), in his mosaic-like work, "Life on the Mississippi," relates how in New Orleans the word *lagniappe* is used, and states the singular fact that its use is restricted to that one city, and is not heard or understood elsewhere. This reminded me that in Savannah, Georgia, where my boyhood was passed, there is a word whose habitat is limited to that one town, and, perhaps, its immediate vicinity. I never heard it anywhere else, though I lived for several years in the interior of that State. The word is *brottus*. I spell it as it is pronounced, for I never heard it spelled, or saw it in print or writing. Its use is confined almost exclusively to children and negroes. In this respect, as well as its meaning, it resembles *lagniappe*. It means a little something over or in excess of a given quantity, and partakes of the nature of a gratuity. I can best illustrate its exact definition by explaining in what circumstances it is used. If a child or a negro, either upon their own account, or in the performance of an errand for parents or employers, makes a purchase at a grocery or other store, the child or negro will usually ask, "What are you going to give me for *brottus*?" or, "Aren't you going to give me something for *brottus*?" This is a request for a small present or good-will offering, in return for the purchaser's patronage. The shop-keeper seldom refuses to honor this draft upon his generosity, but adds to the commodity purchased a little more of the same, or perhaps some other small article of trifling value. In the case of children, this little gift usually takes the form of a bit of candy, or a "specked" apple or orange. Of course, a request for *brottus* is beneath the dignity of the adult white person; hence its use only by children and negroes.

The origin of this word is entirely unknown to me. I suppose that like *buccara* (white person), or *goober* (peanut), or "ground nut," as it is commonly called at the South, it belongs to some African dialect, imported with slaves from the Dark Continent.

E. M. DAY.

III.

HYPNOTISM IN POLITICS.

FREE traders are endeavoring to repeat on the sphere of social science a recent wonderful experiment successfully performed by medical experts in Paris. It is recorded that a paralytic patient was placed by the side of a hypnotized subject, and that the paralysis was successfully transferred from the patient to the subject. The physicians who performed this marvelous experiment were bound, of course, to repeat the operation to relieve the hypnotized subject from the disease that he had scientifically acquired. American free traders are now trying to hypnotize America. England is suffering from a slight shock of commercial paralysis, and seeks, by free trade, to relieve herself at our expense. Undoubtedly her

"science" would be fully able to effect the transfer of her paralysis to our America. By it, *she* would be restored to perfect health. But before we submit to the free trade hypnotistic experiment, would it not be prudent to exact securities for the retransfer of the paralysis? John Bull never fails to look out for his own interests and it is quite probable that as soon as he felt that his paralysis had left him, he would take good care that the experiment should be stopped before the disease could be returned to him. The interests of science might suffer by this selfishness; but business before science is his practice.

JOHN BALL, JR.

IV.

THEATRICAL CAPUAS.

THE ordinary man is not given to reflection. As he witnesses some splendid performance at a well-appointed city theatre, he little reflects that the actor whose delineations of character surprise him into admiration, has gained the power of forcing tears or smiles from an audience, not in Capua, but in Sparta. There is no royal road to learning—so they say; but the educational paths which royalty travels are usually smoothed and graded by well-trained gardeners; and as the ways by which royalty saunters its life-passage through the world are usually rendered pleasant and easy by forethought and skilful care, so the experience which a theatrical novice must gain may be written by heredity or social influence upon the finger-posts marking the paths which lead to the temple of fame.

The way which every man treads for himself over the trackless plain of life is marked by stumbling-blocks and pitfalls. As in nature, so in human experience, those paths are rugged which lead the traveler over boulders and along precipices upward to the mountain peak whence he can spy the whole world beneath him. And, no doubt, if we could read the workings of the human heart, we would learn that the difficulties of the ascent lend an additional pleasure to the attainment of the height, and that those achievements are most highly prized which are gained by days of hard physical exertion or nights of exhausting thought. Nothing can be really worse for the embryo actor than a leap at once into public favor. The Spartan boy never knew the luxury of the physical health he enjoyed until he felt the fox gnawing at his vitals.

The actor cannot know the joy of fame if he gain not reputation by his own struggles. Anticipation is apt to be so much more full of pleasure than attainment that success is robbed of half its joy if it come too quickly. Men value life the more after they have surmounted the realities of life. It is a childhood in Sparta which makes the pleasures of Capua so enervating to the stranger sojourning in Capua. Those actors whom good fortune or family influence has placed at once upon the metropolitan stage have seldom the theatrical power which characterizes those who served their novitiate as barnstormers in the country. The greatest actors have always been the ones who, when acquiring the rudiments of their education have delineated human passion amid bare and makeshift surroundings—who, from the circumstances in which they were placed, have been forced to influence their audience by an exact simulation of human hopes and fears, and joys and sorrows, without the adventitious aid of elaborate stage-setting. Our great city theatres are as enervating to real theatrical talent as the city of Capua was to the army of Hannibal. The Spartan discipline of country barnstorming trains the actor to become the metropolitan star, capable of "holding the mirror up to nature"—capable of evoking the sympathy and applause of his audience, independently of the skill of the scene-painter and stage carpenter.

MARGARET COGHLEN.